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FIRST COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

Programme period	Actual resources programmed	$
1993-1996	Net IPF (at 70 per cent)	2 752 000
	Estimated cost-sharing	10 620 000
	Total	13 372 000

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I. DEVELOPMENT SITUATION, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

A. Current socio-economic situation

1. The Kyrgyz Republic is a mountainous, land-locked country, bordered by China to the east and, clockwise, by Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The population of 4.5 million is 55 per cent rural. The ethnic composition has changed recently as a result of emigration, mostly by people of Russian and German origin. Slightly over half the population is Kyrgyz, 18 per cent Russian, 13 per cent Uzbek and the remainder made up of many small minorities. The capital, Bishkek, has a population of 650,000. The country is well endowed with natural resources. Although only 7 per cent of the land is arable, about 40 per cent of the mountainous terrain is used as pasture for sheep and cattle. It was the third largest producer of wool in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and minerals currently produced include uranium oxide, antimony, gold, mercury, rare earths and molybdenum. Coal production is significant and tin/tungsten production is about to come on stream. Hydroelectricity is the principal source of domestic energy but the country is heavily reliant on imports of petroleum and natural gas for heating and transport.

2. The social structure also indicates significant advantages for development. The literacy rate is 97 per cent and education, health and social services have an established infrastructure with experienced staff. Life expectancy at birth is estimated at 68 years. Local government systems are well developed with experience in education, health systems and the social distribution network. However, social spending has been more than twice the average of countries at comparable levels of income and systems have begun to deteriorate. Unemployment, which was largely disguised under the centralized social system, is emerging as a serious problem, especially with regard to women.

3. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan has embarked on a difficult stage of transition to an open market-oriented economy. Radical changes have been made at the policy and legislative levels and the Government is now challenged by implementation of these changes and at the same time by the need to preserve the best features of those existing socio-economic structures which contribute to a stable society.

4. Kyrgyzstan has been severely affected by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, owing to the loss of significant transfers from the Union to the budget and to disruption of trade within the region, resulting in a serious deterioration in the terms of trade. Real gross domestic product (GDP) has declined for three successive years and is estimated to show a further decline of 10 per cent in 1994, placing Kyrgyzstan at the bottom end of the lower middle-income range of countries. The decline in real income and living standards has affected most of the population. The World Bank estimates that 45 per cent of the population is below the poverty line. This places heavy demands on the country's political and economic management. Severance from the rouble zone and introduction of the som as the national unit of currency has reduced the impact on Kyrgyzstan of economic disruption within Russia but, for the foreseeable future, the economy is linked to developments in the countries of the former Soviet Union. The comparable situation in most of those

countries, together with the interdependence with neighbouring countries of Central Asia due to their land-locked location, indicates that the problems of the region and the amount of international cooperation and assistance required are longer term than the word "transition" tends to suggest.

5. The country became independent as the Kyrgyz Republic in 1991 and adopted a post-independence constitution in May 1993. Political factions under the former system rapidly assumed the role of political parties, but are still in the process of developing coherent structures and agendas which constitute the policy choices available in a multi-party system. This process is assisted by a pluralist and diverse press. The period prior to independence saw some outbreaks of ethnic violence and, while this has not recurred, there is a serious increase in criminal activity directly linked to the deteriorating economic situation.

B. National development objectives and strategies

6. Kyrgyzstan was among the first of the newly independent States of the former Soviet Union to commence a comprehensive programme of political and economic reforms. Besides constitutional and legal reform applying the principles of separation of powers and multi-party democracy, economic reforms were undertaken to transform the centrally planned economy to a more efficient, competitive, market-oriented structure. The transition process, involving changing institutions, practices and attitudes, has been more problematic than mere regulatory change. Exacerbated by the loss of traditional markets and the emigration of skilled technical and managerial workers, the reform programme fell short of expectations. Although the resultant economic crisis led to a sustained fall in the incomes and standards of living of the majority of the population, the Government has expressed its strong commitment to continue its broad-fronted programme of structural reform.

7. Kyrgyzstan became a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in May 1992 and in 1993 entered into the first of two stand-by arrangements, supported by credits from the International Development Association (IDA) and grants from bilateral donors. However, these stabilization efforts have been undermined by the slow progress in systemic reforms, particularly in enterprise restructuring. With most of the regulatory measures in place, the focus of current strategies is extensive systemic reform measures to restructure state-owned enterprises, to redesign the social safety net, to achieve a transparent privatization process and to improve market incentives in the agricultural sector. Current strategies also give greater recognition to the importance of attitudinal change, through a strong emphasis on training, particularly of young professionals.

8. The resolve of the Government to continue the reform programme in the face of deteriorating living conditions for a majority of the population has gained the strong support of the international community.

II. EXTERNAL COOPERATION

A. Role of external cooperation

9. Kyrgyzstan has been active and successful in maintaining and furthering sound relations within the Commonwealth of Independent States and in establishing bridges to its outer rim of neighbouring States, to the Muslim community and to the western donor community. A Consultative Group has been formed under the chairmanship of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and has been successful in mobilizing funds to cover external financing requirements. At the Group's first meeting in 1992, $480 million was pledged, approximately 70 per cent of which was disbursed in the following year. The 1994 meeting was also successful in eliciting sufficient pledged funds to close the external financing gap, subject to resolution of disbursement problems.

10. While most of the initial pledges have been by way of support for stand-by arrangements, largely in the form of commodity assistance and other quick disbursing forms of aid, increased attention is being given to technical cooperation, which was the subject of special attention at the second meeting of the Consultative Group in June 1994. The Government's policy is to finance technical cooperation on grant terms and to resort to the use of loan funds for technical cooperation only in exceptional circumstances.

11. Following the collapse of the centrally planned system, agencies of the United Nations system were influential in the early stages of identification of needs and programmes. Their relative importance has diminished, due to the limits on funds available for programmes at the implementation stage. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have established offices, the latter's operations fully funded by bilateral cost-sharing. The United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have significant programme inputs, while the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have also contributed at the technical cooperation level. Technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) is not significant, although, due to the availability of technically well-trained manpower, there is considerable scope for the use of local expertise among countries of the region.

B. Aid coordination arrangements

12. Given the rapidity and severity of the exogenous shocks affecting Kyrgyzstan's social and economic structure, the country has been exceptionally quick to develop alternative linkages, including those for aid, and to create new administrative structures or to direct the use of existing structures for quite different relationships. The State Commission on Foreign Investment and Economic Assistance, Goskominvest, was established in 1992 for the management and coordination of external economic relations and the promotion of investment. It is the official contact point for donor agencies and donor meetings.

including the Consultative Group. The government's presentation to the second Group meeting demonstrated that, in the short time of three years, considerable progress has been made in the development of systems for the management of aid. The Government reported on 140 technical cooperation projects financed by 15 donors and implemented by 20 agencies. However, this load has presented problems of coordination and management. Due to the lead time necessary to achieve an understanding of the differing requirements of donors, there is already some evidence of fatigue with the demands of donors to achieve accountability within their own systems. The Government has recognized that a high priority must continue to be given to the development and prioritization of the public investment programme, its linkages with technical cooperation and the need for accountability to donors. UNDP assistance is sought in this field.

13. At the formal, international level, the Consultative Group is valued. It has provided the forum for review of economic developments against which the Government presents its external financing requirements. As the process for the public investment programme is further developed, the Consultative Group is expected to play an important role in defining priorities and facilitating coordination.

14. A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office was opened in Bishkek in February 1993 to coordinate and manage the response of the United Nations system to Kyrgyzstan's development needs. At the request of the Government, UNDP has responded to the need for coordination among donors on an ongoing basis at the local level, with particular attention to the problems of coordination of technical cooperation. UNDP has initiated and chairs a local donor group which meets bimonthly for exchange of information, consideration of situation reports and other matters and as required for attention to humanitarian assistance.

III. THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

A. Assessment of ongoing country programme

15. The ongoing country programme profile totals $13.4 million, approximately in the proportions of 44 per cent for approved projects; 37 per cent for humanitarian items and 19 per cent for pipeline projects. The 70 per cent programmable level of the fifth cycle Indicative Planning Figure (IPF) allocation is $2.75 million or only 21 per cent of the total which is actually being negotiated or managed, with a further 13 per cent funded from Special Programme Resources (SPR) and other United Nations accounts. The balance is committed or sought from other cost-sharing sources.

16. With regard to capacity-building, a clear distinction should be drawn between, on the one hand, the well-developed technical capacity of an educated population and, on the other hand, the problems of developing fully functioning systems of management appropriate to a democratic, market-oriented society. The overall programme of cooperation and assistance to the country suggests the need for attention to problems of environmental degradation, but the priority of these issues has been influenced by the immediacy of economic problems.

17. The current programme commenced inevitably in an ad hoc manner as UNDP and agencies responded to the rapidly evolving needs of the newly independent Kyrgyz Republic. The ad hoc nature was also influenced by severe restrictions on funds and the use of regional funds to commence priority programmes, which might otherwise have been funded from a national programme. The cost-sharing component has been influenced both by the Government's interest to have first recourse to UNDP for technical cooperation and by UNDP success in the mobilization of resources to support the cooperation and assistance required. The programme has changed, only to the extent that the Government has adopted a firmer position as to what it requires from UNDP. Following the opening of the UNDP office in February 1993, the initial programme was organized into a two-year short-term country framework. While this has been a useful interim measure to present the programme and to account for it, it falls short of a normal UNDP country programme in terms of duration, status within UNDP and the understanding of that status by other agencies. The programme has not been subject to the full range of processes of evaluation of a country programme, although empirical evidence, particularly the interest of the Government and financing partners suggests a successful programme. However, all of these factors inhibit the development of a programme which makes optimal use of resource mobilization initiatives and execution modalities. They are also inimical to that purpose of a country programme to promote a more coordinated and coherent approach.

B. Proposals for UNDP cooperation

1. The preparatory process

18. The country programme for Kyrgyzstan has cut short the time-frame for consultation which is usually employed by UNDP and its cooperation partners. There are several reasons for the deviation from the normal process. Firstly, for the reasons outlined above, the parties share an interest in putting the programme on customary UNDP footing as soon as possible. Secondly, the Government places the utmost emphasis on the urgent need for support to replace policies, structures and programmes, which are now inoperative or not functioning adequately due to the transitional stage of the economic and social system. Almost all of the components of the country programme flow from this priority requirement. Thirdly, the highest priority is placed on efficient management of technical cooperation to improve quality, cost-effectiveness and management of cooperation and assistance from all sources. The Government has highlighted the central role of UNDP in this task.

19. Accordingly, the Government and UNDP have employed an abridged process to arrive at a country programme designed to facilitate the Government's management of its transition policies. The programme builds on the identification and formulation missions undertaken by the specialized agencies through UNDP as well as those of UNDP itself, on the definition of policy arising from the national technical cooperation assessment and programmes (NATCAP) process and on the appraisal of various cost-sharing partners. In particular, the programme arises from regular, continuing dialogue between the Government and UNDP and the decision of the Government (at Cabinet level) to request UNDP to play a lead role in the coordination and management of technical cooperation.

2. Strategy for UNDP cooperation

20. The Government places a high value on the comparative advantage of the neutral status of United Nations agencies and programmes. The radical nature of transition to a market-oriented economy has meant a focused attention to policy change and a sharp definition of the Government's requirements. At the same time, the speed of change and the scope of intervention of aid donors has imposed a new management burden on systems for development. The Government has decided that UNDP is equipped, by its neutral status, to assist it in its task of improving systems for the coordination and management of aid. The same element of comparative advantage has suggested the involvement of UNDP in politically sensitive areas of democratization, such as the development of systems for the management of foreign affairs, improvement of the mass media in a pluralist society and the strengthening of the rapidly emerging non-governmental organization (NGO) sector.

21. Capacity-building in the transitional context means a redirection of training towards the design and operation of systems that are sustainable in a market-oriented economy. The Government is concerned to build on its well-developed, educational infrastructure and to make use of United Nations access to a wide range of international expertise, sensitive to development needs, rather than adopt a replacement approach. Thus, capacity-building has been an important consideration in most of the programme items. Although educational levels are high and there is considerable scope for the use of local technical expertise, national execution has not yet been employed to a significant degree, as adequate financial and audit systems are not yet in place. Scope for the use of national execution will be taken into account as these systems improve.

22. UNDP capacity to mobilize resources is an extremely important determinant of the programme. The significant cost-sharing element of the current programme is appreciated by the Government, which is confident of UNDP management for the reasons of comparative advantage stated above and because this modality can be further developed.

3. Proposed UNDP cooperation in selected areas of concentration

23. The proposed areas of UNDP concentration are for technical cooperation in policy guidance and systems development in strategic areas of democratization, aid management and coordination and, for the longer term, management development. Capacity-building is integral to the programme and training is a functional component of each item of the programme. Kyrgyzstan classifies its technical cooperation under five headings: policy advice, investment project preparation, advisory services, training, and direct (material) assistance. The area for UNDP concentration thus extends beyond the policy advice category, but in each case the thrust of the activity is cooperation for the operation of improved polices and systems. The areas of concentration are as follows:

(a) Democratization;

(b) Aid management and coordination;

(c) Management development.

Democratization

24. The Government is committed to the reorientation of policies and systems in many areas, as appropriate to the transition to a democratic system of government. The development of these systems is essential to poverty eradication and participatory development in a democratic society. Most of the areas are politically sensitive at the domestic level as a result of the disruption to the community as a result of the collapse of the former centrally planned system. A number may also be sensitive at the international level. This category includes support for the new Ministry of Foreign Affairs, strengthening the mass media and the role of non-governmental organizations in the community. Although the project for Strengthening the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is fully funded by Austria, the Government regards its implementation by UNDP as vital for neutrality. The project provides an integrated programme of advice, intensive courses and on-the-job training. UNDP's multilateral status helps it to locate training opportunities in many countries, as well as within the United Nations system. Use of a multilateral agency is also appropriate for the project Mass Media in a Period of Reforms and Transition, which includes among its objectives the sensitization of policy makers to the requirements of an independent media sector. The project is executed by UNESCO and includes a cost-sharing contribution from UNFPA, which is utilizing the project to improve understanding of health and population issues.

25. Under the centrally planned system of government, organizations dependent on voluntary effort tended to be linked to the Government and were not strictly non-governmental organizations. Since the collapse of that system NGOs have emerged rapidly. The NGO potential to complement government services is of particular value in the current period of severe economic dislocation and social difficulties. The emerging Government-NGO relationship is a potentially sensitive area and the Government has sought UNDP assistance in the project for Promotion of Community-based Development for Poverty Reduction. In a lead agency role, UNDP has the capacity to harness the considerable resources that are potentially available from international NGOs and to encourage this effort within a Government-NGO framework of mutual respect. The project will draw on the services of United Nations Volunteers (UNVs). NGOs will also be involved in the Women in Development (WID) project, which is at an early stage. Women have been severely affected by the period of change, through the loss of social services and employment opportunities. The project has a poverty alleviation objective, through support for the establishment of a WID Bureau for training, and accessing and coordinating resources and programmes with a WID focus.

26. An important development for the country programme flows from the study entitled Democratic Institution-Building in Kyrgyzstan, funded by the SPR item for the Management Development Programme mission surveys. This study has identified a wide range of democratization needs appropriate for technical cooperation. Documentation as modules will facilitate the Government's

prioritization. The potential needs far exceed UNDP contributions from both IPF and SPR sources and UNDP will seek cost-sharing assistance for discrete modules. The issue of the democratization process is also being dealt with in the National Human Development Report prepared by the National Academy of Sciences, with support from UNDP. Furthermore, this Report is the first step towards the promotion of sustainable human development (SHD) in the Kyrgyz Republic and will be the basis for a national SHD strategy.

Aid management and coordination

27. Aid management and coordination is an entirely new function in Kyrgyzstan. The Government was obliged to commence this function in an ad hoc way, drawing on assistance from whatever resources were available at independence. It was appropriate from the standpoint of neutrality that policy and systems for aid should be established with multilateral, rather than bilateral assistance. Early cooperation and assistance were provided by the World Bank, supplemented by UNDP's project to strengthen the institutional capacity of Goskominvest, through the development of management development functions and programmes. Project inputs as initially envisaged have been modified by the subsequent start-up of a regionally funded NATCAP exercise, covering countries from central and eastern Europe as well as from the former Soviet Union. The regional approach has allowed some economies of scale in relation to the provision of short-term expertise and a module approach to some of the training and database components. However, since aid coordination and management are a completely new function, Kyrgyzstan's needs are considerable and the Government has welcomed cost-sharing contributions from the Government of Switzerland. The Government perceives UNDP as the lead agency to assist in this area.

Management development

28. The Government recognizes that the success of the transition process and the conduct of new systems depends on a reorientation and strengthening of management. The Management Development project, centred in the Bishkek International School of Management and Business aims to contribute to the country's formal management training requirements. The project represents UNDP's major allocation of $1 million from the IPF and $400,000 from the Management Development Programme. Over 50 per cent of funds will come from bilateral cost-sharing. Strengthening of the School is critical to national capacity-building with a long-term time-frame. Similar advantages in the UNDP ability to mobilize resources apply to the Health Care Reform Programme, which has major in-kind contributions from the Turkish International Cooperation Agency and other donors. The project is located in a critical area to reorient the safety net of health care and focuses on management and training. The central role of WHO is also recognized in its appointment as executing agency.

29. Further assistance to the transition process is being provided by the project Support to the Government Economic Reform Programme. The project was specifically designed in the early period of transition to respond to ad hoc requests for short-term consultancy advice drawing on United Nations International Short-term Advisory Resources (UNISTAR), United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) and Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programmes. In the circumstances of the transition period, the capacity to

respond to ad hoc requirements through an umbrella project facility meets a critical need.

30. In the longer-term, support to national capacity-building will be provided to enable Kyrgyzstan to manage its natural resources efficiently through an environmental management training programme, and its cultural heritage through assistance to the promotion of the national epic, Manas. Furthermore, UNDP envisages providing cooperation and assistance to strengthen the national capacity to formulate and implement HIV/AIDS policies.

Regional programmes

31. Regional programmes are important to Kyrgyzstan in view of its land-locked situation and economic interdependence with countries of the region. These are extremely diverse in terms of resources and development problems and the Government is particularly supportive of those subregional programmes in which the countries have a common level of interest. To date, good use has been made of the availability of regional programmes in the early stage of identification of needs and definition of programmes of cooperation and assistance. For the medium- to longer-term, constraints on the Government's staffing resources will require a selective approach to participation in regional programmes, with particular priority being given to those which relate directly to national programmes and initiatives arising within the subregion, such as the Aral Sea and subregional Trade and Transport and Biodiversity projects. Attention will continue to be given to cost-effective linkages between regional, subregional and national programmes, as is already demonstrated by the linkages in the fields of aid coordination and management, and democratization and governance.

C. Assistance outside the main country programme areas

32. The programme to date has included several items of humanitarian assistance, including non-programmable, post-disaster reconstruction and food aid distributed by WFP. United Nations funding consisted only of allocations from UNDP and the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UNDHA), amounting to 8.6 per cent of the total of $5 million. Given UNDP's capacity for coordination and mobilization of resources, it is expected that the continuing programme will include UNDP involvement in humanitarian projects. There is no IPF figure for humanitarian projects in the country programme.

D. Implementation and management

33. The long-term time-frame of the Management Development project lends itself to a multi-component programme approach. This approach is more problematical with regard to the programme as a whole, owing to the volatile nature of the transition stage of the economy, the interest of the Government in having first recourse to UNDP for assistance in sensitive policy areas as problems arise and the limited IPF relative to the Government's requirements of UNDP and UNDP's consequent dependence on mobilization of external resources. Within these constraints, the programme will aim towards a programme approach, through the use of flexible and complementary mechanisms. Progress towards this aim is

demonstrated in the complementary structure of the regional NATCAP and the national aid management project. A particular feature of the democratization area of concentration will be the modular approach to facilitate cost-sharing.

34. Attention will be given to national execution but, since the thrust of the programme is towards policy advising and professional-level training, this will not be a priority in all activities. National execution is intrinsic to aid coordination and management and Ministry of Foreign Affairs projects and will be considered in other reform projects, subject to the achievement of suitably transparent management systems.

35. Because of the limited IPF, the bulk of the programme will be dependent on cost-sharing and, at the request of the Government, efforts will be made to expand this modality. These resource mobilization efforts will include presentations by the country office to donors and potential donors to Kyrgyzstan, as, for example, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United States and the European Union, based on programmes or projects specifically developed for this purpose. Efforts will also continue for resource mobilization through the mechanisms which already exist at the Regional Directorate for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States level. As in the past, resource mobilization efforts undertaken jointly with the Government will also be pursued. Careful attention will continue to be given to modalities within the United Nations system, including the use of UNV specialists, TOKTEN and other special-funding mechanisms. Regional programmes of United Nations agencies and funds will enable the Government to consider the development of national activities in fields not yet included on a substantial scale, such as Women in Development and the environment.

Annex I

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

I. ESTIMATED RESOURCES (IPF + cost-sharing) TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT FOR PROGRAMMING

	$	$
Fifth cycle IPF	2 752 000	
Subtotal IPF		2 752 000
Project cost-sharing (Government)	444 000	
Project cost-sharing (third party)	10 176 000	
Programme cost-sharing	-	
Subtotal cost-sharing		10 620 000
TOTAL		13 372 000

II. ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES (IPF + cost-sharing) BY AREA OF CONCENTRATION

Area of concentration	Thousands of dollars			Percentage of total resources
	IPF	Cost-sharing	Total	
Democratization	658	1 632	2 290	17.1
Aid management and coordination	188	612	800	6.0
Management development	1 906	3 413	5 319	39.8
Assistance outside main programme areas (humanitarian		4 963	4 963	37.1
TOTAL	2 752	10 620	13 372	100

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III. COMPLEMENTARY ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER SOURCES IN AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

		$	$
A.	UNDP-administered funds		
	SPR	-	
B.	Other United Nations resources		
	UNFPA	1 029 000	
	UNICEF		
	Subtotal		1 029 000
	Other United Nations agencies (non-UNDP funded)		
	UNDCP	1 764 000	
	UNESCO	600 000	
	WHO	200 000	
	UNIDO	30 000	
	Subtotal		2 594 000
C.	Non-United Nations resources	-	
	TOTAL		3 623 000

Annex II

PROGRAMME MATRIX a/

Area of concentration	Area of focus					
	Poverty eradication and grass-roots participation in development	Environment and natural resources management	Management development	TCDC	Transfer and adaptation of technology	WID
I. DEMOCRATIZATION	*		*		*	*
II. AID MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION			*		*	
III. MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT		*	*		*	

a/ Asterisks indicate major linkage only.